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Assistance in mine action

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Assistance in mine action

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 48/7 of 19 October 1993, 49/215 of 23 December 1994, 50/82 of 14 December 1995, 51/149 of 13 December 1996, 52/173 of 18 December 1997 and 53/26 of 17 November 1998, all adopted without a vote,

Considering mine action to be an important component of United Nations humanitarian and development activities,

Reaffirming its deep concern at the tremendous humanitarian problem caused by the presence of mines and other unexploded devices that have serious and lasting social and economic consequences for the populations of mine-infested countries and constitute an obstacle to the return of refugees and other displaced persons, to humanitarian aid operations and to reconstruction and economic development, as well as to the restoration of normal social conditions,

Bearing in mind the serious threat that mines and other unexploded devices pose to the safety, health and lives of personnel participating in humanitarian, peacekeeping and rehabilitation programmes and operations,

Reiterating its dismay at the high number of victims of mines, especially among civilian populations, particularly children, and recalling in this context Commission on

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Human Rights resolutions 1995/79 of 8 March 1995,[1] 1996/85 of 24 April 1996,[2] 1997/78 of 18 April 1997,[3] 1998/76 of 22 April 1998[4] and 1999/80 of 28 April 1999[5] on the rights of the child and resolutions 1996/27 of 19 April 1996[2] and 1998/31 of 17 April 1998[4] and decision 1997/107 of 11 April 1997[3] on the human rights of persons with disabilities,

Deeply alarmed by the number of mines that continue to be laid each year, as well as the presence of a large number of mines and other unexploded devices as a result of armed conflicts, and thus convinced of the necessity and urgency of a significant increase in mine-clearance efforts by the international community with a view to eliminating the threat of landmines to civilians as soon as possible,

Noting the decisions taken at the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects,[6] particularly with respect to Protocol II of the Convention and the inclusion in the Amended Protocol[7] of a number of provisions of importance for mine-clearance operations, notably the requirement of detectability,

Noting the entry into force of the Amended Protocol II of the Convention on 3 December 1998,

Recalling that the States parties at the Review Conference declared their commitment to keep the provisions of Protocol II under review in order to ensure that the concerns regarding the weapons it covers are addressed, and that they would encourage efforts of the United Nations and other organizations to address all the problems of landmines,

Noting the entry into force on 1 March 1999 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and that the Convention has been signed by over one hundred and thirty-five States, that the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention was held at Maputo in May 1999, and that measures were taken at that meeting to, among other things, provide assistance for mine clearance and rehabilitation, the social and economic reintegration of mine victims and mine-awareness programmes,

Stressing the need to convince mine-affected States to halt new deployments of anti-personnel mines to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of mine-clearance operations,

Recognizing the important role that the international community, particularly States involved in the deployment of mines, can play in assisting mine clearance in mine-affected countries through the provision of necessary maps and information and appropriate technical and material assistance to remove or otherwise render ineffective existing minefields, mines and booby-traps,

Concerned about the limited availability of safe and cost-effective mine-detection and mine-clearance equipment as well as the need for effective global coordination in research and development to improve the relevant technology, and conscious of the need

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[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3* and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

[2] Ibid., *1996, Supplement No. 3* and corrigendum (E/1996/23 and Corr.1), chap. II, sect. A.

[3] Ibid., *1997, Supplement No. 3* (E/1997/23), chap. II.

[4] Ibid., *1998, Supplement No. 3* (E/1998/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[5] Ibid., *1999, Supplement No. 3* (E/1999/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[6] CCW/CONF.I/16 (Part I).

[7] Ibid., annex B.

to promote further and more rapid progress in this field and to foster international technical cooperation to this end,

Recognizing that, in addition to the primary role of States, the United Nations has an important role in the field of assistance in mine action,

Welcoming in this regard the mine action coordination centres already established under the auspices of the United Nations as well as the creation of international trust funds for mine clearance and mine assistance,

Noting with satisfaction the inclusion in the mandates of several peacekeeping operations of provisions relating to mine action work carried out under the direction of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, in the context of such operations,

Commending the action already taken by the United Nations system, donor and recipient Governments, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations to coordinate their efforts and seek solutions to the problems related to the presence of mines and other unexploded devices, as well as their assistance to victims of mines,

Also commending the role of the Secretary-General in increasing public awareness of the problem of landmines,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General concerning the activities of the United Nations in assistance in mine action,[8] in particular the emphasis on the lessons learned, and the recommendation to improve the emergency preparedness capability of the Organization;

2. *Calls*, in particular, for the continuation of the efforts of the United Nations, with the assistance of States and institutions as appropriate, to foster the establishment of mine action capacities in countries where mines constitute a serious threat to the safety, health and lives of the local population, calls for the extension of those efforts to countries where mines are an impediment to social and economic development efforts at the national and local levels, emphasizes the importance of developing national mine action capacities, and urges all Member States, particularly those that have the capacity to do so, to assist mine-affected countries in the establishment and development of national capacities in mine clearance, mine awareness and victim assistance;

3. *Invites* Member States to develop national programmes, in cooperation with the relevant bodies of the United Nations system where appropriate, to promote awareness of landmines, especially among children;

4. *Expresses its appreciation* to Governments, regional organizations and other donors for their financial and in-kind contributions to mine action, including contributions for emergency operations and for national capacity-building programmes;

5. *Appeals* to Governments, regional organizations and other donors to continue their support to mine action through further contributions, including contributions through the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action to allow for the timely delivery of mine action assistance in emergency situations;

6. *Encourages* all relevant multilateral and national programmes and bodies to include, in coordination with the United Nations, activities related to mine action in their humanitarian, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development assistance activities, where

[8] A/54/445.

appropriate, bearing in mind the need to ensure national ownership, sustainability and capacity-building;

7. *Stresses* the importance of international support for emergency assistance to victims of mines and for the care and rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of the victims, and also stresses that such assistance should be integrated into broader public health and socio-economic strategies;

8. *Encourages* Governments, relevant United Nations bodies and other donors to take further action to promote gender- and age-appropriate mine-awareness programmes, victim assistance and child-centred rehabilitation, thereby reducing the number of child victims and relieving their plight;

9. *Emphasizes again* the important role of the United Nations in the effective coordination of mine action activities, including those by regional organizations, and especially the role of the United Nations Mine Action Service on the basis of the policy on mine action and effective coordination developed by the Secretary-General;[9]

10. *Emphasizes* in this regard the role of the United Nations Mine Action Service as the focal point for mine action within the United Nations system and its ongoing collaboration with and coordination of all the mine-related activities of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes;

11. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to develop further a comprehensive mine action strategy, taking into consideration the impact of the landmine problem on rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, with a view to ensuring the effectiveness of assistance in mine action by the United Nations, and emphasizes in this respect the importance of further multisectoral assessments and surveys;

12. *Emphasizes* in this respect the importance of developing a comprehensive information management system for mine action, under the overall coordination of the United Nations Mine Action Service and with the support of the Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining, in order to facilitate the setting of priorities and the coordination of field activities;

13. *Welcomes* recent approaches with regard to the establishment of mine action coordination centres and encourages the further establishment of such centres, especially in emergency situations, and further encourages States to support the activities of mine action coordination centres and trust funds established to coordinate assistance in mine action under the auspices of the United Nations Mine Action Service;

14. *Urges* Member States, regional organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to continue to extend full assistance and cooperation to the Secretary-General and, in particular, to provide him with information and data as well as other appropriate resources that could be useful in strengthening the coordination role of the United Nations in mine action, particularly in the fields of mine awareness, training, surveying, detection and clearance, scientific research on mine-detection and clearance technology and information on and distribution of medical equipment and supplies;

15. *Emphasizes* in this regard the importance of recording the location of mines, of retaining all such records and making them available to concerned parties upon cessation of hostilities, and welcomes the strengthening of the relevant provisions in international law;

[9] A/53/496, annex II.

16. *Calls upon* Member States, especially those that have the capacity to do so, to provide the necessary information and technical and material assistance, as appropriate, and to locate, remove, destroy or otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines, booby-traps and other devices in accordance with international law, as soon as possible;

17. *Urges* Member States and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations that have the ability to do so to provide, as appropriate, technological assistance to mine-infested countries and to promote scientific research and development on humanitarian mine action techniques and technology so that mine action activities may be carried out more effectively at lower costs and through safer means and to promote international collaboration in this regard;

18. *Encourages* Member States and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to continue to support ongoing activities to promote appropriate technology, as well as international operational and safety standards for humanitarian mine action activities, and in this context welcomes the initiation of the revision of international mine-clearance standards and the development of guidelines for the use of mine-detection dogs and mechanical mine-clearance equipment, as well as the development of an international test and evaluation programme;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session a report on the progress achieved on all relevant issues outlined both in his previous reports to the Assembly on assistance in mine action and in the present resolution, including progress made by the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international and regional organizations as well as national programmes, and on the operation of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action and other mine action programmes;

20. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session the item entitled "Assistance in mine action".